

The Voice



A Newsletter for Yakima County School Retirees

April 2026

Darren Joffs: Physical Therapist SERVING THE YAKIMA SCHOOL DISTRICT AND SENIOR YAKIMA RESIDENTS WITH THEIR PHYSICAL THERAPY NEEDS



Program arranged by April president, John Osegueda

Introducing Darren Joffs, Physical Therapist.

I have known Darren Joffs for over twenty years and we met when our kids were involved in youth sports. I have always been amazed with his uncanny ability to make or fix anything seemingly with an air of ease and expertise.

This unusual gift led Darren into the medical field. Originally from the Salt Lake City area, he earned his undergraduate degree, B.S. Exercise Science at BYU.

Darren then did his graduate studies at Mt. St Marys earning his master's degree in physical therapy and started a career as physical therapist.

Darren would say he has had the honor of helping our senior community in the Yakima area recovering from injuries, surgeries, or adapting to senior living. He brings a sense of loving care to his patients and their families as they are navigating new waters regarding their health issues. His skills include not only traditional therapeutic skills, but also cutting edge treatments as the field of physical therapy is making advances that allows people with medical needs to live a better life. I asked him to join us for our monthly meeting as I am confident Darren has important and pertinent information to share with us regarding this very important topic that is so relevant to us all as we age gracefully.

Currently Darren is working as a physical therapist for the Yakima School District as well as serving seniors with their physical therapy needs in Yakima.



Darren Joffs, PT
Yakima School District

YCSRA CONVENTION DELEGATES NEEDED

DATE: JUNE 7, 8, 9 LOCATION: We need members of YCSRA to join us at Great Wolf Lodge.

ALL EXPENSES ARE REIMBURSED: Registration, Hotel, and Mileage

CONTACT: If you would like to join us, please contact Kathy Schultz ASAP. Thanks!

EMAIL: chevyhvn@icloud.com CALL: 509 901 2148



THE VOICE

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Mini-grants

Linda Sumner
509 248 1875

GENERAL MEETING

When: Monday, April 6, 2026
Where: Englewood Christian Church, 511 N 44th Avenue

Fellowship: 12:30 pm
Coffee/Tea and Treats will be provided

Program: 1:00 pm
Darren Joffs, Physical Therapist:
Serving the Yakima School District and Senior Yakima residents
with their physical therapy needs.

The Following People have signed up to bring:

REFRESHMENTS

Peggy Young 509 453 7250
Rosie Churchly 509 965 2636
Rosemary Saul 509 424 0701
Jan Saxton 509 658 1527
Carolyn Wilson 509 952 1911

DRAWING PRIZES

Peggy Young 509 453 7250
Jan Saxton 509 658 1527
Paul Schafer 509 453 2626
M & C Stenehjem 509 966 3409
Linda Sumner 509 248 1875

If you want your issue of
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YOU must be certain that Sandy Gavin
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If you have changed your email address in the last year or you are not receiving your newsletter by your preferred method, please let Sandy Gavin know ASAP. Thanks!
Sandy Gavin, sandyg1948@gmail.com

Opinions expressed in **The Voice** are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the view of the YCSRA Board or the editors. Editorial contributions and articles as well as ideas for articles are welcome. The deadline is the 12th of each month. Send information to Kathy Schultz. Co-editors. Kathy Schultz • 509 966 9341 chevvhvn@icloud.com Sue Ryan-Osegueda • 509 895 4231 yakavegas@gmail.com Design. Eric Patrick • 509 985 7768 ecpatrick@charter.net

WE SEND OUT WSSRA GREETINGS!

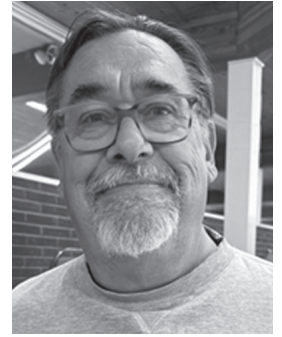
Let's support our members with get well wishes, condolences, thank yous, congratulations, thinking of you and more. Email or call me with names and I'll get the card(s) sent out for you. Email: cmstenehjem@msn.com or 509-966-3409. Leave a message if no one answers.

~ Millie Stenehjem



HEALTH MATTERS

By John Osegueda



15 Tips to Enjoy the Spring Season in a Healthy Manner

As the weather warms up and flowers bloom, spring offers the perfect opportunity for older adults to refresh their routines and focus on health and wellness.

1. Get Moving with Outdoor Activities – With longer days and pleasant temperatures, it's the ideal time to head outside. Take a walk around your neighborhood or local park, try gardening, or join an outdoor exercise class. Not only will you enjoy physical benefits, but time outdoors also improves mood and mental clarity.

2. Stay Hydrated – As temps rise, don't forget to drink up! Older adults are more prone to dehydration, so keep a water bottle handy and sip throughout the day. Not a fan of plain water? Try infusing it with fresh fruit or herbal tea for a flavorful twist.

3. Protect Your Skin – A bit of sunshine is great for vitamin D, but don't skip sun safety. Apply SPF 30+ sunscreen, wear a wide-brimmed hat, and opt for light, long-sleeved clothing while enjoying the outdoors.

4. Spring Clean for a Fresh Start – Decluttering and deep cleaning isn't just for aesthetics—it can improve respiratory health, reduce fall risks, and lift your spirits. Tackle one room at a time and ask for help if needed.

5. Stay Connected with Loved Ones – Social connection plays a major role in wellness. Schedule a visit or join a local community group to boost emotional health.

6. Embrace Fresh, Seasonal Eating – Take advantage of spring's bounty! Add more colorful fruits, veggies, and fresh herbs to your meals. Consider visiting a farmers market or starting a small container garden. A nutrient-rich diet helps increase energy and boost immunity.

7. Prioritize Restful Sleep – Quality sleep is vital for overall health. Stick to a consistent bedtime routine, create a calming sleep space, and talk to your healthcare provider if sleep challenges persist.

8. Stay on Top of Health Screenings – Now's the time to catch up on annual checkups, vision and hearing tests, and recommended vaccines like flu or pneumonia. Prevention and early detection are key.

9. Keep Your Mind Engaged – Stimulate your brain by reading, doing puzzles, learning a new skill, or class.

10. Practice Relaxation & Mindfulness

Reduce stress by incorporating mindfulness practices into your day. Try gentle yoga, meditation, deep breathing, or simply enjoy the peace of nature.

11. Take Advantage of Senior Discounts & Events

From museum passes to wellness programs, many places offer springtime discounts and events for seniors. Check with local organizations and community centers—you might find a new favorite activity!

12. Plan Safe and Enjoyable Travel

If you're planning a spring getaway, pack medications, and stay hydrated. Traveling with a companion or joining a group tour can also add ease and peace of mind.

14. Enjoy the Great Outdoors – Whether it's birdwatching, planting flowers, or sitting on a sunny bench, spending time in nature helps reduce stress and elevate your mood. Embrace all the sights, sounds, and scents of spring!

15. Give Back or Volunteer – Helping others is great for the soul. Whether it's volunteering at a local charity, mentoring, or lending a hand to a neighbor, giving back brings a strong sense of purpose and connection.



Springtime Health Habits to Start Today

In addition to the tips above, here are three simple habits to kick off the season:

- **Check Your First Aid Kit & Emergency Supplies:** Make sure your supplies are current and complete.
- **Schedule a Health Check-In:** Spring is the perfect time for a reset. Make appointments and review any health questions with your doctor.
- **Recommit to Wellness Goals:** With fresh produce, longer days, and renewed motivation, explore new recipes, outdoor movement, or self-care routines that bring you joy.



APRIL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Larry Scholl

The Washington State Legislature is about to adjourn its 60 day short session. It has been a very challenging session trying to deal with an anticipated revenue shortfall over the next biennium of \$2 to \$4 billion. State programs funded by federal COVID money during the pandemic were subject to cutbacks or even elimination as the COVID money is no longer available. Other income revenues are also predicted to be less as the economy slows. Before the legislative session even started, Governor Ferguson warned lawmakers that he would not approve any new spending in this year's budget.

Early in the session, the outlook for getting a COLA for Plan 1 members in TRS and PERS seemed bleak, at best. WSSRA was hoping that a \$3 billion surplus that had accumulated, (because of a calculation error in the state actuary's office), in the LEOFF 1 (Law Enforcement Officers, Fire Fighters) Plan 1 Pension System could be transferred to the TRS Plan 1 to eliminate the Plan 1 unfunded liability and create a permanent COLA for Plan 1. That didn't happen. Lawmakers decided to transfer the \$3 billion to the general operating budget beginning in 2029.



With the session quickly coming to an end, and no COLA bills in process, it seemed inevitable that Plan 1 retirees would endure yet another year with no COLA. However, Republican Senator Dozier from southeast Washington revived SB 5862 that had died for lack of action during the last session. It became SSB 5862 and quickly gained traction, being voted out of the Senate with a unanimous vote. It then went to House Appropriations where its future was very uncertain. About this time the Senate and House budgets were released. The Senate budget funded the COLA bill, SSB 5862 but cut back the Medicare Eligible Health Insurance Benefit from \$183 per month to

\$150 per month for all Plan 1, 2, and 3 members who are receiving a health insurance benefit. The House budget fully funded the Medicare benefit of \$183 per month but there was no money for a Plan 1 COLA. School retirees and our lobbyists initiated a "full court press" to get the SSB 5862 voted out of the House Appropriations Committee. It was eventually voted out of Appropriations unanimously and went on to receive a unanimous vote of approval on the full House floor. SSB 5862 is now awaiting Governor Ferguson's signature. The 3% COLA should appear on your monthly retirement benefit at the end of July.

Because the Medicare Eligible Health Insurance Benefit was in the Senate budget at \$150 per month and in the House budget at \$183 per month, the difference had to be resolved by a Conference Committee whose task was to come up with one final state budget. The final state budget was released Tuesday evening on March 10th. The budget included full funding of the 3% one-time COLA for Plan 1 and the full Medicare Eligible Health Insurance Benefit of \$183 per month.

We need to be extremely grateful to our area lawmakers; Senator Curtis King, Representatives; Gloria Mendoza, Deb Manjarrez, Chris Corry and Jeremie Dufault for their unwavering support of Yakima County School Retirees.

In a legislative session burdened with revenue shortfalls and cuts to existing worthwhile programs across the state, Washington State School Retirees fared very well.

Unfortunately, we will need to do it all over again next session.



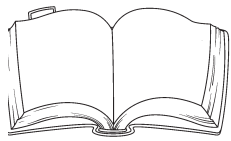
Favorite Recipes from Our Members

From the Kitchen

HOW TO MAKE THE BEST COSMOPOLITAN IN THE WORLD!

This recipe came from KATHY FLETCHER, past Membership Chair and President of YCSRA. She put together a basket for WSSRA Convention a couple years ago with all the ingredients.

- 3 Parts Grey Goose Vodka
 - 1/2 part Grand Marnier or Grand Gala Triple Orange Liqueur
 - Splash of Cranberry Juice
 - A Squeeze of Fresh Lime
 - Garnish with Lime Peel
- RELAX AND ENJOY!



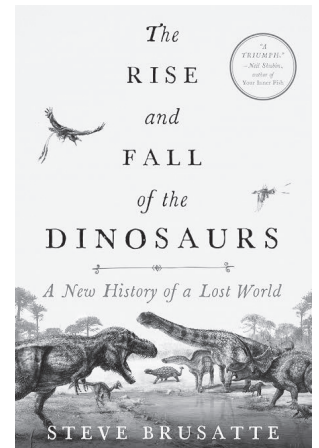
Book Corner

The Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs - A New History of Their Lost World by Steve Brusatte. Book Review by John Osegueda

It is a safe assumption to state that everyone loves (or has a deep fear respect) for dinosaurs. From a young age we read about them, drew them and probably even tried to envision ourselves as a T Rex terrorizing a younger sibling. As we became more learned we discovered that all that we thought we knew about our prehistoric friends was just the tip of the iceberg, and that knowledge was inaccurate and incomplete at best. The ancient Greeks wrote of finding fossils of marine organisms and the ancient Chinese considered fossils to be dragon bones. Fast forward to the 1800's and by 1822 the terms paleontology was introduced and soon after geology was merged into what we think of the modern study of paleontology.

Much has changed in the intervening years and we have come to realize that ancient life took place all over the globe in many forms, from land and ocean dwellers and even in the skies. Scientists are constantly finding new species. I heard a review of *"The Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs - A New History of Their Lost World"* on Science Friday on NPR and was impressed how the author Steve Brusatte was able to simplify and yet fully explain and entertain his subject matter. Many books of this ilk can be burdensome with hard to understand facts and vocabulary. Sure, the text has its share of Latin words describing often the location, if the fossil's discovery and the pictures are not gallery worthy, but Brusatte is able to weave a story about how these creatures developed into the dominant life force of their time. The reader is able to see beyond the popular folklore or Hollywood interpretations of these ancient animals as if we were to see them at a zoo. The book chronicles the evolution of dinosaurs, and their rise as the dominant inhabitants of the earth, and ends with an account of the extinction of the non-avian dinosaurs from the Chicxulub asteroid. It also includes a discussion of the evolution of feathered dinosaurs and the recognition of birds as dinosaurs, and an epilogue of sorts discussing the post-dinosaur emergence of mammals.

To be perfectly honest with you, the book is best when you read it in short installments because it is full of facts and examples, and much of the content could be missed with a casual read. This does not take away that it is time well spent, you don't have to be a paleontologist to enjoy this book. Just sit back and try to envision for yourself in this unique time in earth's history and all the wondrous players on its stage.



MINI-GRANT WINNERS

By Linda Sumner, Mini-Grant Coordinator

East Valley Elementary - Rhoda Boyle, Mini-Grant Winner

“Thank you so much for the \$400 grant for our dramatic play area. Our students have been increasing their social skills, vocabulary, and fine motor skills while they have fun playing Pizza Shop, Latte Stand, Donut Shop, Lemonade Stand, and Grocery Store. They have been learning how to work cooperatively while sharing materials and their imaginations have run wild. We will be adding to our repertoire and creating a Farmer’s Market, Santa’s Toy Shop, Ice Cream Shop, and Garden Center as time goes on. Thank you for the opportunity you’ve given our students!”



Mini-grant coordinator, Linda Sumner, Karen Whitman, Counselor at McClure Elementary & Rosemary Saul, Mini-Grant Committee



Tap Root Theater performing “Pet School” with a theme of explaining what to do if you are being bullied. Teacher, Suki Covell, used a \$500 mini-grant to finance the play.

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